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Tuesday, July 9, 2019 | View in browser

Good morning.

We're covering **Jeffrey Epstein's indictment**, landmark **peace talks for Afghanistan**, and **Elizabeth Warren's fund-raising**.

By Mike Ives

Jeffrey Epstein's indictment ripples through Washington

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan have charged the financier with sex

trafficking, and they revealed that a trove of lewd photographs of girls had been discovered in a safe in his Manhattan mansion.

The indictment on Monday could prompt a moment of reckoning for the Justice Department, which has wrestled with accusations over a plea deal prosecutors struck with Mr. Epstein in a 2008 case that shielded him from federal prosecution. That deal was overseen by Alexander Acosta, then the U.S. attorney in Miami and now President Trump's labor secretary.

After the indictment was released, Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic speaker of the House, called for Mr. Acosta to resign. Attorney General William Barr recused himself from the case, saying his former law firm had represented Mr. Epstein.

Closer look: Photographs of Woody Allen, former President Bill Clinton and Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, hang in Mr. Epstein's $56 million home.

Opinion: Michelle Goldberg writes that Mr. Epstein's case "reveals a deep corruption among mostly male elites across parties, and the way the very rich can often purchase impunity for even the most loathsome of crimes."

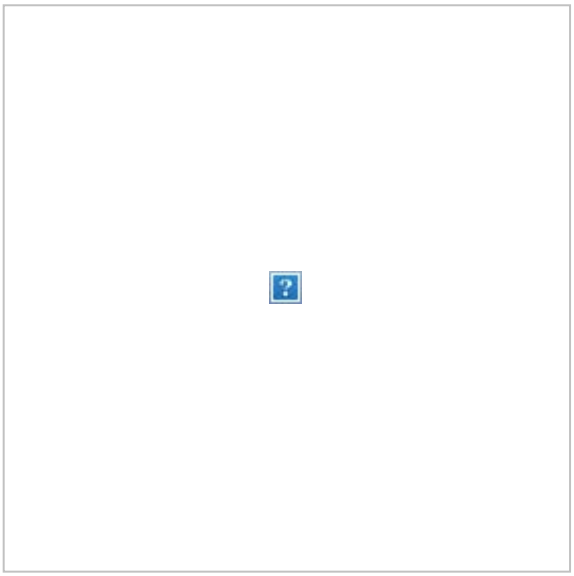
Obamacare is back on trial

A federal appeals court panel will hear arguments today on whether a federal judge in Texas was right to strike down the Affordable Care Act. The case, which could end up at the Supreme Court, threatens insurance protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

The battle is being fought with the 2020 elections as a backdrop, and the case already features in Democratic ads targeting President Trump and other Republicans.

The background: Republican state officials filed the initial suit against the federal government, and the Trump administration has declined to offer a defense.

Related: A federal judge ruled on Monday that the Trump administration could not force pharmaceutical companies to disclose the list prices of their drugs in television ads.



Caitlin Penna for The New York Times

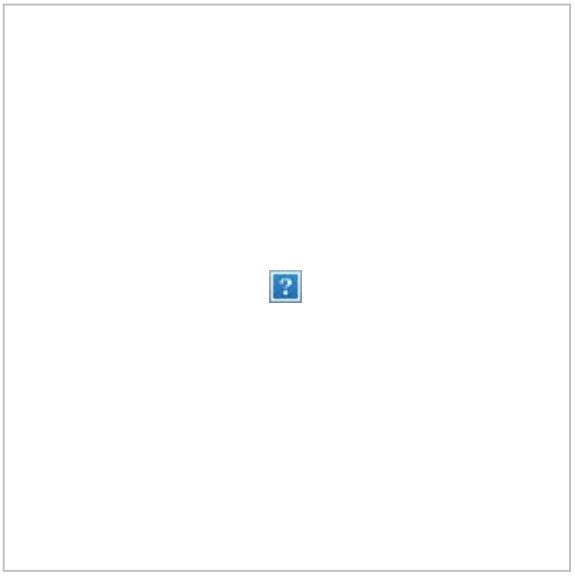
The Republican women ready to run in 2020

In North Carolina today, the pediatrician Joan Perry, above, is in a Republican primary runoff for a congressional seat. Her campaign is a test case of sorts for her party's efforts to recruit and cultivate female candidates.

As of last month, 187 Republican women had filed paperwork to run for the House in 2020, compared with 120 in the 2018 election cycle. The surge is happening partly because Republicans watched Democratic women make historic gains last year and decided to adopt a similar strategy.

Democrats: Tom Steyer, a California billionaire and activist, may enter the

2020 presidential contest today, a day after a fellow Californian, Representative Eric Swalwell, said he was ending his own bid for the nomination.



A monastery in Myanmar that is the home of Ashin Wirathu, a hard-line monk and the spiritual leader of an anti-Muslim movement. Minzayar Oo for The New York Times

The rise of militant Buddhism

Over the past few years, a portion of Buddhists have waged deadly attacks against minority Muslim populations, particularly in Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

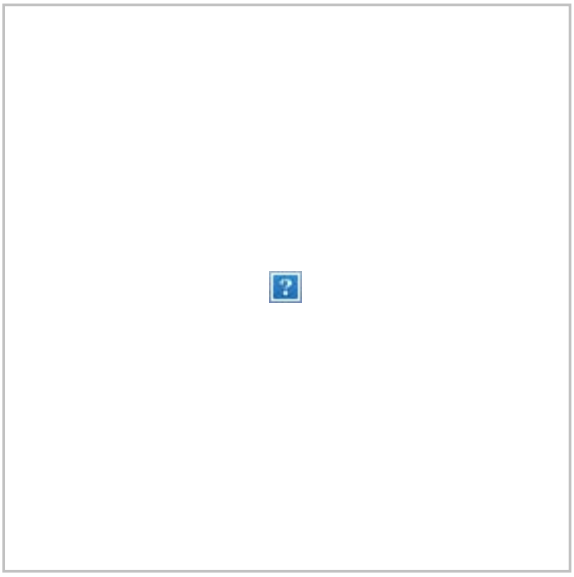
The sense of grievance from followers of a generally pacifist religion might seem unlikely: In both countries, Buddhists constitute overwhelming majorities of the population. But some, especially those who subscribe to the purist Theravada strain of the faith, are increasingly convinced that they are under existential threat, particularly from an Islam struggling with its own violent fringe.

Quote of note: “Buddhist monks will say that they would never condone violence,” an anthropologist said. “But at the same time, they will also say

that Buddhism or Buddhist states have to be defended by any means."

If you have 9 minutes, this is worth it

Software that stokes fears of racial bias



Video footage from surveillance cameras streams into the Detroit Police Department's downtown headquarters. Brittany Greeson for The New York Times

Facial recognition software can return more false matches for African-Americans than for white people, studies show, an effect experts call "algorithmic bias."

A debate over police use of the technology in Detroit, whose share of black residents is larger than in any other sizable American city, underscores a broader reckoning over surveillance.

Here's what else is happening

Afghanistan talks: Representatives from the Taliban and the country's

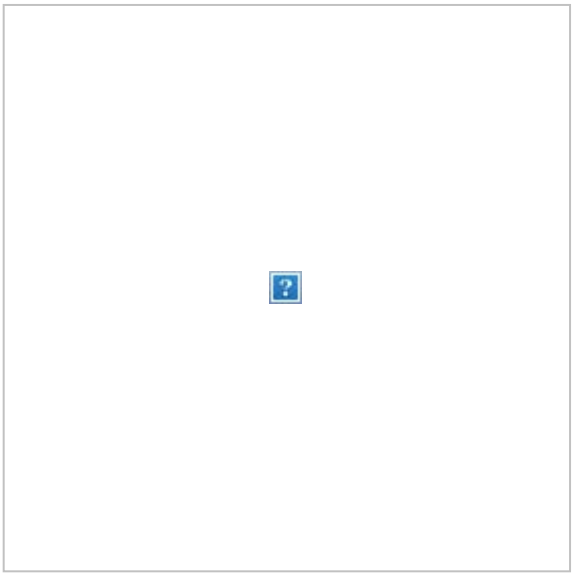
government, meeting for a second day in Qatar, agreed today to a basic road map for negotiating a path to peace.

Turkey's economic crisis: The lira lost more than 3 percent of its value against the dollar in early trading in Asia on Monday, after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan abruptly dismissed the central bank governor over the weekend.

Cross-Atlantic strain: President Trump said on Monday that the White House would no longer deal with Britain's ambassador to the U.S., after the leaking of confidential cables in which the envoy described the Trump administration as "clumsy and inept."

Elizabeth Warren's fund-raising: The Massachusetts senator raised $19.1 million in the second quarter for her presidential bid, ahead of her main progressive rival, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

Census fight: Attorney General William Barr said that he believed the Trump administration could find a legal path to placing a citizenship question on the 2020 count.



NASA

Snapshot: Above, the American astronaut Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969. For the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission, we compiled photographs

from those 20 hours on our closest heavenly neighbor.

Holocaust denial: A high school principal in Florida was removed from his position after refusing to say that the World War II-era genocide of six million Jews was a factual historical event.

Young tennis star's run ends: Coco Gauff, a 15-year-old American, ended an impressive Wimbledon debut with a 6-3, 6-3 loss to Simona Halep on Monday.

Late-night comedy: Most shows are in reruns, so our column is taking the week off.

What we're reading: This piece from The Verge. Michael Roston, a science editor, writes: "Nothing on the internet is ever really new. Bijan Stephen looks to Something Awful, a longtime online community, and considers how its founder long ago dealt with content-moderation issues like those now facing YouTube and Facebook."

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Now, a break from the news

Ryan Liebe for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Simon Andrews.

Cook: One-pot spaghetti with cherry tomatoes and kale is a delicious way to avoid some washing up. (Our Five Weeknight Dishes newsletter has more low-fuss ideas.)

Watch: Our critic called "The Rook," a new paranormal adventure series from Starz, polished and well thought out.

Listen: Ed Sheeran's "Best Part of Me" is a folky testimonial to insecurities — physical and psychological — with acoustic guitar, piano and hesitant vocal harmonies, our chief popular music critic writes.

Read: In "Higher Etiquette," Lizzie Post — the great-great-granddaughter of Emily Post — argues that it's time for cannabis to move away from its surfer and "Cheech and Chong" image.

Smarter Living: Jessica Grose, the lead editor of our Parenting site, is not a huge fan of the beach, but because she is "not totally evil," she's taking her children there anyway. Working with The Wirecutter, she recommends the gear to survive a day in the sun with children. (Pro tip: Give them a big soft-bristled paintbrush to get rid of sand afterward.)

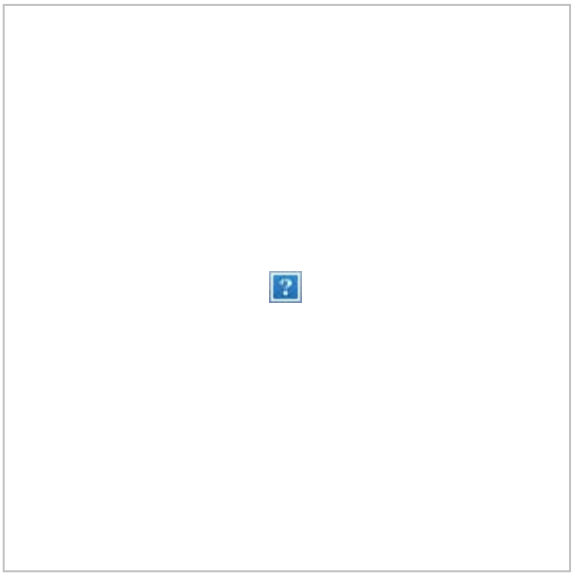
Also: Do you need a coach to help raise children without screens?

And now for the Back Story on …

Qatar's wealth

President Trump welcomes the leader of Qatar to the White House today, with plenty to discuss, including U.S. access to a pivotal air base and Qatar's warm relations with Iran.

Qatar also has access to huge natural gas reserves. That wasn't always a good thing: Natural gas, typically mostly methane, was once seen as an expensive nuisance to oil drillers, and Qatar's massive field was initially a huge disappointment.



The West Bay neighborhood in Doha, Qatar. Tomas Munita for The New York Times

The fortunes of Qatar improved sharply thanks to technology that liquefies natural gas, shrinking its volume, so specially outfitted freighters can make long-distance deliveries relatively cheaply.

Qatar now exports more liquefied natural gas than any other country, and a

boom in global demand has made it very, very rich.

Australia, Russia and the U.S. are also major suppliers, but natural gas is not necessarily a ticket to wealth: Uneven distribution in the U.S. — along with growing environmental opposition — has led to price increases in some regions and negative prices in others.

That's it for this briefing. See you next time.

— Mike

Thank you

To Mark Josephson and Eleanor Stanford for the break from the news. Jake Lucas wrote today's Back Story. You can reach the team at briefing@nytimes.com.

P.S.

• We're listening to "The Daily." Today's episode is about Jeffrey Epstein.
• Here's today's Mini Crossword, and a clue: Talk and talk and talk and talk (3 letters). You can find all our puzzles here.
• The New York Times has named a new Moscow bureau chief: Andrew Higgins, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner who is fluent in Russian, Mandarin and French.

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